

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.

"MORALE": THE TENTH PRINCIPLE OF WAR

By


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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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08 February 2000

  
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## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
2. Security Classification Authority:			
3. Declassification/Downgrading Schedule:			
4. Distribution/Availability of Report: DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED.			
5. Name of Performing Organization: JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			
6. Office Symbol: C		7. Address: NAVAL WAR COLLEGE 686 CUSHING ROAD NEWPORT, RI 02841-1207	
8. Title (Include Security Classification): (UNCLASSIFIED) "MORALE": THE TENTH PRINCIPLE OF WAR			
9. Personal Authors: Mark A. Sturges, LCDR, USN			
10. Type of Report: FINAL		11. Date of Report: 08 February 2000	
12. Page Count: 22		<i>advisor; CAPT Locke</i>	
13. Supplementary Notation: A paper submitted to the Faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.			
14. Ten key words that relate to your paper: Principles of war, Morale, Will, esprit de corps, national morale, individual morale, Merrrill's marauders, Doctrine, British principles of war, China's principles of war.			
15. Abstract: There is no question that the nine principles of war currently embodied in the United States Joint Military Doctrine are valid. However, the principle "morale" should be included as the tenth principle of war. The characteristics of morale are common to the other principles of war, can stand the tests of time and technology, geography, medium of combat, and can be applied at all levels of war to guide the commander in the planning and execution of operations. Countries such as Britain, China, New Zealand, and Australia believe morale is so important that they made it one of their principles of war. Furthermore, great military leaders and writers such as Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, Jomini, Field Marshal Montgomery, and General Eisenhower have all stated beliefs on the importance of morale concerning combat operations.			
16. Distribution / Availability of Abstract:	Unclassified X	Same As Rpt	DTIC Users
17. Abstract Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
18. Name of Responsible Individual: CHAIRMAN, JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			
19. Telephone: 841-6461		20. Office Symbol: C	

## Abstract of

### “MORALE”: THE TENTH PRINCIPLE OF WAR

There is no question that the nine principles of war currently embodied in the United States Joint Military Doctrine are valid. However, the principle “morale” should be included as the tenth principle of war. The characteristics of morale are common to the other principles of war, can stand the tests of time and technology, geography, medium of combat, and can be applied at all levels of war to guide the commander in the planning and execution of operations.

Countries such as Britain, China, New Zealand, and Australia believe morale is so important that they made it one of their principles of war. Furthermore, great military leaders and writers such as Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, Jomini, Field Marshal Montgomery, and General Eisenhower have all stated beliefs on the importance of morale concerning combat operations. Morale is evaluated to determine if it should be a principle of war.

*It is the morale of armies, as well as of nations, more than any thing else, which makes victories and their results decisive.*<sup>1</sup>

Today, almost every major military power in the world has a list of principles of war. Not surprisingly, the experiences that shaped the list of principles differ from nation to nation.<sup>2</sup> Though all the principles seem to have common characteristics that link them together, each country has a particular precept as the foundation of their principles, which are derived from either past experience of their own military successes and failures or the study of other countries' successes and failures.

The earliest known principles on the conduct of war were written by Sun Tzu in China about 500 BC. His book The Art of War provides concise statements concerning issues such as discipline, morale, and the importance of deception and other psychological measures.<sup>3</sup> The modern concept of principles of war originated in the Napoleonic era, but identifying unequivocally the original source of this widely accepted and variously defined concept remains as difficult as it is irrelevant. Belief in the existence of principles of warfare became widespread in the nineteenth century. Henri Jomini is undoubtedly the individual whose thought and writings most directly contributed to the acceptance of the idea that a small number of principles guide the commander in his quest for success on the battlefield.<sup>4</sup> Jomini wrote in his book Summary of the Art of War, "Twenty years of experience have

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<sup>1</sup> Antoine-Henri Jomini, Summary of the Art of War, Trans. G.H. Mendell and W.P. Craighill (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company 1892), 178.

<sup>2</sup> John I. Alger, The Quest for Victory (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press 1982), 177.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 18.

strengthened in me the following convictions: There are a small number of fundamental principles of war, which can not be deviated from without danger, and the application of them, on the contrary, has been nearly always crowned with success.”<sup>5</sup> This concept of the principles of war influenced generations of military writers and teachers and has become the basis of modern military thought relative to the development of martial principles. The British adopted the first official list of principles of war in 1920<sup>6</sup>, followed by the United States in 1921. Other countries such as France, Russia, and China developed their lists of principles of war in subsequent years.

The United States’ principles of war have gone substantially unchanged since their inception in 1921. They are the foundations of Army operations. Concerning the nine principles of war, the Army Operations Field Manual states that they “provide general guidance for the conduct of war at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. They are the enduring bedrock of Army doctrine. The US Army published its first discussion of the principles of war in a 1921 Army training regulation. The original principles adopted by the Army, although slightly revised, have withstood the test of time.”<sup>7</sup>

The history of U.S. conflict is only slightly older than 200 years. Militaries of the world have been involved in battle for centuries. For the US Army to say that its principles have withstood the test of time may be premature. Both Clausewitz and Sun Tzu teach that

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<sup>5</sup> Jomini, 26.

<sup>6</sup> Alger, 123.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Dept. of the Army, Operations, Field Manual 100-5 (Washington: June 1993), 2-4.

there are no fixed laws and rules of the art of war<sup>8</sup>, and even its principles require constant reexamination.<sup>9</sup> Rear Admiral Brown stated in 1949,

We must treat principles of war for what they really are—merely assumptions and abstract ones at that, which have been derived from a study of the mass of complicated war experience throughout history. These assumptions or axioms are abstractions drawn from a particular historical context. As science changes the context of society and weapons, the old assumptions may or may not retain validity. If better ones can be found, the present ones should be discarded, easily, casually like an old skin.<sup>10</sup>

American military successes in the past century indicate that the principles of war currently used as the foundation of United States doctrine are correct, but this does not mean the U.S. list is complete. A careful look at the principles of war currently used in the United States indicates that “morale” should be used as a 10<sup>th</sup> principle of war. This paper will test “morale” against characteristics that are common to the other principles of war. It will also discuss the importance of morale as viewed by other countries and military experts, and the historical impact it has had on past conflicts.

Military scholars have engaged in debates over how to define the principles of war and how to describe their characteristics. They have even argued over whether or not the term “principle” is the proper name for their concepts. A common opinion is that principles of war are capsules of wisdom which have been derived from studies of the successes and failures of the past. They are guides in formulating a theory of war.<sup>11</sup> Since there is no

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<sup>8</sup> Michael I. Handel, “Sun Tzu and Clausewitz: Compared,” Professional Readings in Military Strategy, no. 2, 1991, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Alger, 28.

<sup>10</sup> C.R. Brown, “The Principles of War,” United States Naval Institute Proceedings, June 1949, 622.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 623

definitive list that describes the characteristics of principles of war, the following four characteristics will be used as the test to determine if “morale” is a valid principle of war.

1. Principles of war should be applicable to the strategic, operational and tactical levels of war.
2. Principles of war should be independent of time or technology.
3. Principles of war should be applicable in all geographic conditions.
4. Principles of war should be applicable to air, naval, and ground combat.

The first test to determine if morale can be a principle of war is to evaluate its applicability to the levels of war. A nation determines national strategic security objectives at the strategic level of war.<sup>12</sup> One of the tenets of war is that the government needs the support of the civilian population before it engages in conflict. National morale is defined by Norman Meier, in his book Military Psychology, as “The general interest in ultimate victory evinced throughout the nation.”<sup>13</sup> This national morale and complete unity and steadfastness of purpose are essential to success.<sup>14</sup> Commanders at the strategic level play an important role in developing national morale, largely through their skill at acquainting the public with facts concerning the significant aspects of the conflict. Meier contends that the national morale in all respects can be immeasurably strengthened by facts. Based upon his belief that the American public is a fair, intelligent, reasonable body on the whole, he asserts that it expects reasons for what it is called upon to do; given these bases, it can be expected to respond fully if the conflict is legitimate.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations, Joint Pub 3-0, (Washington DC: 1 February 1995), GL-12.

<sup>13</sup> Norman C. Meier, Military Psychology (New York: Harper & Brothers 1943), 376.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

The operational level of war is the link between national and theater strategic goals and the tactical employment of forces on the battlefield.<sup>16</sup> Leaders at the operational level of war must pay particular attention to the morale of tactical units, because of the impact it can have on the achievement of operational and strategic objectives. A unit affected by poor morale may have lost some of its military effectiveness, and depending on the quality of the enemy, the reduction in morale may be the deciding factor in victory or defeat. General Eisenhower stated "As always, the matter of the Army's morale attracted the constant attention of all senior commanders."<sup>17</sup> He believed that commanders at the operational level of war must be acutely aware of the morale of the soldiers fighting on the front lines. In Crusade in Europe, General Eisenhower provides an example of operational leadership concerned with the possible destruction of morale.

A columnist estimated that any attempt to land on the defended coast of northwest Europe would result in eighty to ninety per cent losses in the assaulting units. This irresponsible statement was sufficiently circulated to cause doubt and uneasiness in the command. Bradley and others immediately took occasion, during numerous visits to troops, to brand this statement for just what it was—a fearful, false, and completely misguided statement by someone who knew nothing of warfare or of the facts. Bradley predicted that the attacking losses would be no greater than in any other stiff battle of comparable size. We went so far as to give publicity to his estimate in the papers and used every other means available to us to prevent the doleful prediction from shaking the confidence of the troops.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> U.S. Dept. of the Army, 6-2.

<sup>17</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (New York: Doubleday, 1948; reprinted., Garden City, NY: Garden City Books, 1951), 237.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.



The tactical level of war is where battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces.<sup>19</sup> Unit commanders and leaders are responsible for the morale, health, and welfare of the individual soldiers. Tactical leaders must instill discipline, conduct training, and provide clear direction, as the basis for developing strong morale and the esprit de corp of the unit. Failure to maintain strong morale at this level may have disastrous results on the proficiency of the individual and unit.

It can be argued that morale is only found at the tactical level of war, because it pertains only to individual factors, which include the biological and psychological needs of the individual. However, morale is a planning consideration at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war. If poor morale diminishes a unit's combat effectiveness to the point that tactical objectives can not be achieved, there may be effects at the operational and strategic levels of war. Accomplishment of strategic objectives depends upon both operational and tactical objectives being accomplished. National morale can have a tremendous impact at the strategic level of war. If national morale is poor, and the American people are not in support of the military conflict, no matter how superior the armed forces are it will be difficult to achieve victory.

The second test of morale as a principle of war will be to assess morale's independence from time and technology. No matter how technology changes with time, morale has always been a constant when it comes to combat. This has been true from the beginnings of war with hand to hand combat to the current use of "high tech" standoff

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<sup>19</sup> U.S. Dept. of the Army, 6-3.

weaponry. Even a small sampling of historical examples illustrates morale's effect on the outcome of military operations even though technology and time are completely different.

In 1066 A.D., at the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror defeated King Harold, resulting in Normandy's seizure of England. In his book The Enigma of Hastings, Edwin Tetlow surmises that the fall of England was caused by the weakened morale of the English fighting-men during battle.<sup>20</sup> Although the Saxon army, estimated at only 6,000 to 8,000 fighting men of an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 men available to fight in England, was slightly weaker numerically than the estimated 8,000 men Duke William brought to the battlefield,<sup>21</sup> throughout the day the battle was comparatively even, with the Normans unable to break the resolute line of Saxon defenders. However, when William tactically redirected his archers to attack the unprepared rear ranks, the relatively small numbers of resultant casualties destroyed the morale of the Saxons, causing their lines of defense to give way in defeat.<sup>22</sup> One can surmise that if King Harold had devoted more attention to morale in the weeks during which he awaited the Norman invasion, he could have fielded a larger, and more resolute, army.

A second example can be taken from the early months of World War II, when the morale of the American nation and military was crucial. Technology from the days of William the Conqueror had given birth to modern ships, aircraft, and weapons. To improve U.S. morale, a plan to take the war to Japan was devised: the "Doolittle Raid", in which 16 American bombers took off from the aircraft carrier "HORNET" to bomb Tokyo and five

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<sup>20</sup> Edwin Tetlow, The Enigma of Hastings (New York: St Martin's Press, Inc. 1974), 195.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 168-173.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 196.

other Japanese cities.<sup>23</sup> The impact of this raid was two-fold; it was one of the first successes the U.S. had in the war, resulting in increased morale for both the American people and military, and second, it had a great impact on Japan's domestic aura of invincibility. Admiral Yamamota was forced to apologize to the Emperor because the Japanese homeland was bombed. This raid had little tactical significance. Only ninety buildings were damaged, and fifty civilians were killed,<sup>24</sup> but through operational planning, the impact on U.S. morale was immense.

A final example of the importance of morale is taken from the Gulf War. United States forces were equipped with some of the most highly sophisticated weapons and machines ever developed. However, morale was still one of the most important planning factors in the war. The heart of Iraq's military strength was viewed to be the Republican Guard<sup>25</sup>, and the emphasis of operations was to destroy their will and morale.<sup>26</sup> The Republican Guard represented more than just an element of Iraqi ground forces; it represented an essential element in the stability of the regime, because it served to protect Saddam against potential dissidents within his own forces.<sup>27</sup> The air assault on Iraqi ground

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<sup>23</sup> Wilbur H. Morrison, Twentieth Century American Wars (New York: Hippocrene Books 1993), 104.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Robert H. Scales, United States Army in the Gulf War: Certain Victory (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Staff United States Army 1993), 128.

<sup>26</sup> Collin A. Agee, "Peeling the Onion: The Iraqi Center of Gravity in Desert Storm," (Unpublished Research Paper, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KA: 1992), 23.

<sup>27</sup> Williamson Murray, Air War in the Persian Gulf (Baltimore, MD: The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America 1995), 43.

forces began against the Republican Guard on the first day and built until nearly all available sorties were attacking Iraqi ground divisions throughout the Kuwait Theater of Operations.<sup>28</sup>

The third test of morale as a principle of war is to assess whether it is applicable in all geographic conditions. Regardless of where an operation is conducted, morale remains as critical to victory as other principles of war. The geographic range of battles described elsewhere in this paper demonstrates that morale is equally applicable in all regions.

The final test of morale as a principle of war is to assess whether it is applicable to air, naval, and ground combat. General Eisenhower stated, "war is waged in three elements but there is no separate land, air, or naval war."<sup>29</sup> The same can be said about morale. It is applied equally to all three elements, and is just as important to soldiers on the ground as it is to sailors on the sea and airmen in the skies. The issues that affect morale may be different in each of these three elements, but it is still the responsibility of leaders at all levels of war to ensure necessary precautions are taken to prevent the destruction of morale. Morale in the air, during World War II, was controlled by completely different factors than morale for the ground combat forces. But each component commander needed to have a plan to ensure its strength. For example, the morale of the bomber crews was affected by the high number of casualties that were being taken, so commanders had limits on how long bomber crews could stay in theater. Once they reached a certain number of combat sorties they were sent to another assignment.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, morale for ground combat troops, because of all the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Eisenhower, 210.

<sup>30</sup> Elmer Bendiner, The Fall of Fortresses: A Personal Account of the Most Daring and Deadly American Air Battles of World War II (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons 1980), 246.

elements that could affect it, was controlled by a wide variety of methods in different units.

As Anthony Kellett stated,

Whatever the force of the motivation that sustains a soldier's morale in battle, they are likely to undergo some changes as result of terrain conditions, difficult climatic and, unfamiliar territory. Good leadership and effective training, and a plan to maintain high morale tend to be resistant to such adversities, and a triumph over difficult situations can have positive effect on morale.<sup>31</sup>

As stated previously, principles of war are fundamental truths pertinent to the practice of war. They guide commanders toward success when their unit is confronted by a comparably armed and capable foe. The significance of morale in the planning and execution of war can not be overlooked. Even though morale was not a doctrinally articulated principle of war for the United States during World War II, General Eisenhower thought of it as one of the most crucial factors of combat. The following is his opinion on the significance of morale during World War II as written in Crusade of Europe:

I must have those commanders who appreciate the importance of morale and had demonstrated a capacity to develop and maintain it. Morale is the greatest single factor in successful war. Endurable comparisons with the enemy in other essential factors—leadership, discipline, technique, numbers, equipment, mobility, supply, and maintenance—are prerequisite to the existence of morale. It breeds most readily upon success; but under good leaders it will be maintained among troops even during extended periods of adversity. The methods employed by successful leaders in developing morale differ so widely as to defy any attempt to establish rules. One observation, however, always applies: in any long bitter campaign morale will suffer unless all ranks thoroughly believe that their commanders are concerned first and always with the welfare of the troops who do the fighting. A human understanding and natural ability to mingle with all men on a basis of equality are more important than any degree of technical skill.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Anthony Kellett, Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle, Orae Report, no. R77 (Canada: Operational Research and Analysis Establishment, November 1980), 317.

<sup>32</sup> Eisenhower, 210.

General Eisenhower was not the only military commander who believed morale is an important factor in the conduct of war. Other nations of the world believe it is so important they have included morale as one of their principles of war. British Field Marshall Bernard L. Montgomery was one of the first modern writers to include morale as a principle of war, in 1920.<sup>33</sup> For Montgomery, "The morale of the soldier is the greatest single factor in war."<sup>34</sup> He described the soldier as the general's raw material. Thus Montgomery judged that it was essential for the general to understand human nature.<sup>35</sup> Morale and the other nine principles articulated in 1920 have remained part of British doctrine to the present day. Canada, New Zealand, and Australia followed Montgomery's and the British lead by also including morale as one of their principles of war.

Mao Tse-tung of China likewise developed a strong belief in the importance of principles of war. In 1936 he commented:

All military laws and military theorists which are in the nature of principles are the experience of past wars summed up by people in former days or in our own times. We should seriously study these lessons, paid for in blood, which are a heritage of past wars. That is one point, but there is another. We should put these conclusions to the test of our own experience, assimilating what is useful, rejecting what is useless, and adding what is specifically our own. The latter is very important, for otherwise we cannot direct a war.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Alger, 152.

<sup>34</sup> Bernard L. Montgomery, The Memoirs of Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, K.G. (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1958), 77.

<sup>35</sup> Kellet, 18.

<sup>36</sup> Mao Tse-tung, Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-tung, Trans. Foreign Languages Press (Peking: Foreign Languages Press 1968), 87.

Through the decades of the Chinese communist revolution and the war against Japan, Mao developed ten basic principles of war. The principle of military spirit was the tenth principle of war on his list.<sup>37</sup>

According to John Alger's Quest for Victory, Mao commented on the principle of military spirit:

In war, the quality and quantity of arms are important: without them, one cannot win. Even with them, one can lose. The most important attribute of a victorious army is the military spirit. In every conceivable way, thought of possible defeat must be eliminated from the army and replaced with an iron will to win.<sup>38</sup>

Mao does not use the word "morale", but clearly the intent is the same.

Throughout history morale, or the lack of it, has had a significant impact on the outcome of military battles and campaigns. Three examples will be discussed. The first, the campaign of "Merrill's Marauders" in Burma between February and May, 1944, provides an excellent example, at the operational level of command, in which the lack of planning to maintain morale had disastrous results on a unit's combat effectiveness.

The book Merrill's Marauders by Alan Baker documents the fact that after three months of fighting in the Burma Campaign, the Marauders, under the command of General Stilwell, were suffering from severe deterioration of morale. The following problems existed at the time: promises were made to the unit that after three months of combat the survivors would earn at least three months of rest and recuperation, possibly with leave in the United States; the unit had been treated by General Stilwell's Headquarters as a "visiting unit" for which it took no responsibility for the care and welfare of the men; since it was a composite

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<sup>37</sup> Alger, 159.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 259.

unit it was not allowed to wear the colors and insignia essential for the development of regimental spirit. Throughout its first three months of combat the unit had been in continuous contact with the enemy, but no awards or decorations had been awarded to members of the unit except for the routine Purple Heart. There were also reports that the unit's health was being ignored. In May 1944, after one third of the unit had to be evacuated due to morale and physical problems, an investigation was conducted by the Inspector General of the Army. He concluded that the War Department's plans and assumptions had been misunderstood by the Marauders' junior officers and enlisted men as firm promises, reinforced by unauthorized statements from those in responsible positions. The promises were never fulfilled and this together with the physical deterioration of the men, the view that the senior command did not care about their welfare, and a belief that proper hospitalization procedures were being ignored resulted in a complete breakdown of morale in a major part of the unit. However, other units in theater who were never given promises that that they would be leaving on particular dates or after a certain amount of time suffered far less significant morale problems. Furthermore, a study of the medical history of the China-India-Burma Theater revealed that the Marauders' health was actually as good or better than that of the Chinese, British, and Japanese forces in the same area.<sup>39</sup>

Many of the factors that demoralized Merrill's Marauders are addressed by General Eisenhower in Crusade of Europe:

Morale of the combat troops had always to be carefully watched. The capacity of soldiers for absorbing punishment and enduring privations is almost inexhaustible so long as they believe they are getting a square deal, that their commanders are looking out for them, and that their own accomplishments are understood and appreciated. Any intimation that they

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<sup>39</sup> Alan Baker, Merrill's Marauders (New York: Ballantine Books 1972), 141-147.



are victims of unfair treatment understandably arouses their anger and resentment, and the feeling can sweep through a command like wildfire.<sup>40</sup>

It can't be proven that even if the operational commanders had made a concerted effort to improve morale the Marauders would not have suffered the same result, but what is known is that there was no plan at all to maintain the morale of the unit.

Another example of operational neglect of morale was the defeat of the French army in 1940. As Anthony Kellett stated in his writings in Combat Motivation, the French were regarded by many observers just before the Second World War as one of the most powerful armies in the world. During the Phony War the French army waited in inactivity behind its defenses in the winter of 1939-1940. During this time its morale and discipline were seriously eroded by a number of factors, yet the high command, physically and spiritually remote from the troops, did nothing to arrest the decline, preferring to treat military operations as an academic exercise. Although the French high command was well aware of the low morale, nothing was done to improve it.<sup>41</sup> Some insight on this poor morale and the reason it wasn't improved is revealed by French Army Commander in Chief General Gamelin's subsequent apology after 1940, "I realized that as I spent my time exclusively with staff officers, I was not in sufficient close touch with the spirit of the country and the troops."<sup>42</sup>

In "Morale" The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct, G. Stanley Hall described perhaps the most salient instance in all of history in which the collapse of morale on a large

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<sup>40</sup> Eisenhower, 315.

<sup>41</sup> Kellett, 21.

<sup>42</sup> Alistair Horne, To Lose a Battle: France 1940 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company 1969), 109.

scale had strategic consequences: the Russian debacle of 1917. A nation of 180,000,000, with an army of nearly 20,000,000 sturdy fighting men, lost its morale, abandoned the field to the enemy, and in its disintegration tore down the most autocratic regime in Europe.<sup>43</sup> The many causes for the poor morale include inadequate food supplies, excessive inflation, tremendous peasant unrest in the villages and cities, and inadequate supplies of weapons, but it ultimately arose from a belief that the czarist regime did not care about the welfare of the army and people.<sup>44</sup> As quoted in The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, the Russian staff assessed in 1917 that “The army was simply a huge, weary, shabby, and ill-fed mob of angry men united by the common thirst for peace and by common disappointment. All that Russia could look forward to now was defeat....”<sup>45</sup> The failure of the leadership to take care of the welfare of the army and people was a major reason for their collapse.

It can be argued that morale should not be added to the US principles of war because morale is already covered in doctrine as a tenet of the first principle of war, “objective”.

Field Manual 100-5 discusses the principle of war “objective”:

The ultimate military purpose of war is the destruction of the enemy’s armed forces and will to fight. The ultimate objectives of operations other than war might be more difficult to define; nonetheless, they too must be clear from the beginning. Linkage, therefore, between objectives at all levels of war is crucial; each operation must contribute to the ultimate strategic aim.<sup>46</sup>

The term “will” is also defined in the U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5.

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<sup>43</sup> Granville Stanley Hall, Morale: The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct (New York: D. Appleton and Company 1846), 24.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000 (New York: Random House 1987), 264.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 265.

<sup>46</sup> U.S. Dept. of the Army, 2-4.

Will is the disposition to act toward achievement of a desired end state. It is an expression of determination, the articulation of choice and desire. A platoon takes the hill because it wants to take the hill. The squad defends its position because it wants to hold the position.

Ultimately, the focus of all combat operations must be the enemy's will. Break his will and he is defeated. When he no longer wants to fight, he cannot fight. Conversely, if his will remains strong, even though physically weakened and materially depleted, he remains a formidable opponent.

Leaders are the main source of will. They inspire their soldiers with the desire to win, to accomplish the mission, and to persevere in the face of all difficulties. When the will of the enemy commander is broken, his force quickly disintegrates. Analyzing and attacking the underpinnings of his will therefore is key to victory.<sup>47</sup>

One could therefore argue that morale as a principle of war is not required, because Army doctrine already plans to develop "will" throughout the ranks of a unit, and this will ensure that a unit will be able to withstand any opposition or hardship they may face.

The 'will' to fight or the 'will' to win is the ultimate end state of every commander's fighting force, and the defeat of the enemy's will is the end result of a successful operation. However, good leadership and inspiration are not the only factors that develop these qualities. The British principle of war "Maintenance of Morale" is defined in British military doctrine as:

Because success in war depends as much on moral as physical factors, morale is probably the single most important element of war. High morale fosters the offensive spirit and the will to win. It will inspire an army from the highest to the lowest ranks. Although primarily a moral aspect it is sensitive to material conditions and a commander should look after the well-being of his men.<sup>48</sup>

Existing U.S. Army doctrinal focus is inadequate, because it is limited to "unit" morale. This potentially neglects operational and strategic consideration's of morale.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>48</sup> British Chief of the General Staff, Design for Military Operations-The British Military Doctrine, Army Code No. 71451 (n.p. 1989), 67.

Morale is the foundation of “will”. Without it countries and armies would not be successful. However, morale should be planned and fostered at all levels of war. Leadership and discipline at the unit level is essential, but commanders at all levels must always be aware of the status of the armed forces' morale, and have a plan to keep it at high levels as conflicts evolve. National morale is a vitally important influence on war, as Samuel Griffith stated in his translation of SunTzu’s “The Art of War”.

National unity was deemed by Sun Tzu to be an essential requirement of victorious war. This could be attained only under a government which was devoted to the people’s welfare and did not oppress them. By relating war to the immediate political context, that is to alliances or the lack of them, and to unity and stability on the home front and high morale in the army as contrasted with disunity in the enemy country and low morale in his army.<sup>49</sup>

The management of morale must always be maintained at all levels and it shouldn’t be left to chance. Commanders from the tactical to the strategic levels should always be concerned with morale. Making it a principle of war will ensure that all leaders will study and plan for the maintenance of morale.

## Conclusion

Principles of war have been in existence for centuries, but modern principles of war have only been articulated since the early 1900’s, after the completion of the First World War. That war had a significant impact on many countries’ criteria in the development of their principles of war. Countries such as Britain, China, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia believe morale is so important that they made it one of their principles of war. The

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<sup>49</sup> Sun Tzu, The Art of War, Trans. Sameul B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press 1963), 39.

characteristics of morale are common to the other principles of war. It can be applied at all levels of war to guide the commander in the planning and execution of operations. Morale can stand the tests of time, geography, and medium of combat. Great military leaders and writers such as Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, Jomini, Montgomery, and Eisenhower have all stated their belief in the importance of morale and the effects it can have during conflict. There is no question that the nine principles of war currently embodied in U.S. Joint military doctrine are valid, but "morale" should be added as the tenth principle of war.

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